

Jackson County could actually be losing people over the next few years.

Table 2 shows the percentage of change in the county and towns between 1960 and 1970. As one can see, only Dillsboro and Webster experienced population growth over the last census decade. Table 3 gives a comparison of townships and the county according to certain population characteristics. Canada Township has experienced the most significant population decrease (-25.2%) between 1960 and 1970, while Cullowhee Township has had the most increase (95.4%) over the same period. Webster Township also experienced a substantial increase of some thirty (30%) percent between 1960 and 1970.

Jackson County had the highest increase (21.4%) in population between 1960 and 1970 in comparison with surrounding counties. Transylvania was second in population increase (20.4%) to Jackson County. However, when measured over a twenty (20) year period, 1950 to 1970, Jackson County experienced a 10.8 percent increase in comparison to a 22.9 percent increase in Transylvania County. Both Macon and Swain Counties experienced losses in population for the same twenty (20) year period.

POPULATION BY AGE GROUP

Population by age group gives an indication of trends in the number and age of persons likely to be living in the county in the future. Table 5 indicates that the percentage of persons in Jackson County fourteen (14) years and younger has been decreasing over the past twenty (20) years. Over the same period of time, persons between fifteen (15) and twenty-four (24) years and fifty-five (55) years and older has been increasing. Increases in the age group fifteen (15) to twenty-four (24) years is due primarily to the influx of students enrolling in Western Carolina University.

With less children being born in the county, population growth will have to occur through in-migration. Permanent in-migration will need to be the